11/06/23 • Updated 11/16/23 • COVID › VIEWS

Study Data Showed COVID-Vaccinated Kids Shed Virus Up to 3 Times Longer Than Unvaxed — But Authors Concluded They Were 'Equally Contagious'

The authors of a study published Oct. 23 in JAMA Pediatrics concluded that vaccinated and unvaccinated children who got COVID-19 were equally contagious. That's how the media reported on the study, but the data showed that vaccinated kids shed the virus for up to 3 times longer than unvaccinated children.

By Angelo DePalma, Ph.D.

Miss a day, miss a lot. *Subscribe to The Defender's Top News of the Day.* ***It's free.***

Children who received the COVID-19 vaccine and those who didn't both shed the virus for a median time of three days, according to a research letter published Oct. 23 in JAMA Pediatrics.

The authors' findings led them to suggest that school policies requiring students with COVID-19 to stay at home for five days are appropriate and that schools need not consider vaccination or booster status in back-to-school policies.

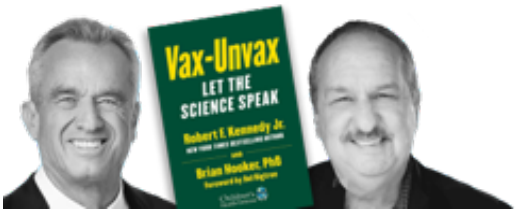
However, although this advice may be sound, it was based on an unsound statistical trick that hid the significant disparities in viral shedding between vaxed and unvaxed kids.

While all unvaccinated children in the study were clear of the virus by day six, 10 of 52 vaccinated children (19%) took double the median virus-clearance time to be virus-free. Three subjects (about 6%) were still infectious on day 10 — three times longer than the reported median.

How long children remained contagious after a COVID-19 diagnosis remains a discussion topic, despite global data showing children overwhelmingly survive infection.

A recent study found kids rarely transmit the virus to adults, which is unsurprising given a 2021 study showing that nose/throat swabs from infected children were only half as likely — compared with swabs from adults — to contain virus capable of causing illness.

RFK Jr. and Brian Hooker's
New Book: "Vax-Unvax"



Here's how researchers conducted the study

Between April and September 2022, researchers led by Neeraj Sood, Ph.D., a health policy expert at the University of Southern California, recruited 76 children ages 7-18 with a positive PCR test for COVID-19. Half were male and 68.4% (52 subjects) were vaccinated for COVID-19.

Of the vaccinated kids, 35 had received two doses, 15 received a third shot (booster), and two did not provide details.

Investigators took throat swabs from the subjects on the day they tested positive (day 0), and every two days thereafter up to day 10.

Samples were tested for their ability to infect cultured cells through a "cytopathic" or cell-changing effect. Cytopathic assays use microscopes that are not powerful enough to see viruses or their entry into cells but instead, look for visually obvious changes over time in test cells exposed to the viral swab. Microscopic examinations occurred on days six, eight and 10.

Investigators reported the "median duration of infectivity" — how long a child was infectious — as three days for both vaccinated and unvaccinated subjects.

The median of a dataset is the middle value, with an equal number of values above and below. The average, or mean, equals all the values divided by the number of entries.

The mean and median of the same data can be very different. For example, the median value of the dataset 2, 3, 5, 8, 42 is 5 (the number in the middle), but the average is 12. Using median values is legitimate in this case because 5 is closer to a "typical" value and there is only one outlier.

But Sood's tactic of designating the 20% of his subjects who continued to shed virus for up to 10 days as "outliers" is dubious. All, it turns out, were vaccinated.

As Figure 1 shows, the 10 vaccinated subjects (19%) who remained contagious at the end of day six were not outliers and their infectious status was not a rare, unexplained event but typical for this dataset.

Using median instead of mean infectivity duration downplays the significance of much of the vaxed subject data in Sood's study. The approach was wrong for the unvaccinated group as well, as those data are tightly distributed around the three-day mark with no outliers.

Equating median values for vaxed versus unvaxed allowed researchers to combine data from the two groups and report that 14 participants (18.4%) were infectious on day five and three (3.9%) were still shedding on day 10.

Again, all subjects still positive after day six were vaccinated — but hiding this inconvenient fact allowed the authors to conclude, without considering the more informative mean values, that "there was no association between duration of infectivity and vaccination or booster status."

This contradiction is evident in Figure 1B.

Figure 1B. Percentage of subjects infectious over time, by vaccination status.

Percentage (vertical axis) of vaccinated (orange solid line) and unvaccinated (black solid line) subjects contagious since their initial COVID-19 diagnosis in days (horizontal axis). The numbers below the graph represent the number of patients still shedding virus, with "unvaccinated" and "vaccinated"

groups shown separately. By day 6 no unvaccinated subjects were contagious but 10 vaccinated patients were still shedding virus. On day 10, when the last cell-infection test was run, three vaccinated subjects were still shedding virus.

How the media reported it

Several media outlets picked up the story.

MedPage Today issued a straight-up rehash of the authors' conclusions: "There was no difference in duration of infectivity by vaccination status."

The University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy news reported that some children remained infectious for longer: "Fourteen children (18.4%) were still infectious on day 5 and 3 (3.9%) remained so on day 10."

However, the center failed to mention that all children who remained infectious after day five were vaccinated.

Medical Dialogues repeated both vaccine-favorable narratives: "The median time of infectivity was 3 days, with 18.4% of children still infectious on day five and 3.9% infectious on day 10. The study also found no association between how long children were infectious and whether they were vaccinated."

"The Wuhan Cover-Up"
by Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

ORDER NOW

Why combine vaxed and unvaxed data?

Deliberately excluding relevant data but analyzing them correctly is one way to cherry-pick which results to present and which to obscure. Sood did not do this.

Since he provided all his data he resorted to a more common and accepted approach based on statistical legerdemain or "precise falsehoods." An analogy from everyday life is an attorney who knows his client is guilty but works hard to acquit him nonetheless.

Cherry-picking and selective statistics are part of a larger group of questionable research practices as old as research itself.

One may guess at the motives behind such practices — for example expecting one result (vaccinated children recover from COVID-19 faster than unvaxed) but learning halfway through a study that another outcome (no they don't) is inevitable.

But it usually comes down to the simple fact that no one likes to be wrong.

This article was updated to correct two inaccuracies. The original headline stated that children were spreading COVID-19 when they were actually spreading the coronavirus. The second inaccuracy was not specifying that multiples of spreading times were of the mean number of shedding days.

SUGGEST A CORRECTION

Angelo DePalma, Ph.D.
Angelo DePalma, Ph.D., is a science reporter/editor for The Defender.

Sign up for free news and updates from Children's Health Defense. CHD focuses on legal strategies to defend the health of our children and obtain justice for those injured. We can't do it without your support

Republishing Guidelines

Children's Health Defense Comment Policy

We welcome relevant and respectful comments. Off-topic comments may be removed.

Please read our Comment Policy before commenting.

Got it

10 Comments Login ▼

G Join the discussion…

LOG IN WITH OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS ?

Name

3 Share Best Newest Oldest

Voyt Regnal
10 days ago
"Shedding virus"...WHAT VIRUS ? The whole research represents fairytale.😂

6 0 Reply • Share ›

Joopy
10 days ago
False. Human beings are not disease vectors or biohazards.

6 0 Reply • Share ›

krofter
10 days ago
What are they shedding? Can't be a virus. Kary Mullis, Noble Prize winning inventor the PCR test, in numerous videos before his questionable death weeks before the roll out of covidcon said that his PCR test cannot be used to detect infection.

The only entity that benefits by promoting fear about viruses is big pharma.

3 0 Reply • Share ›

Invisible
10 days ago
Whatever they are shedding, it is not a virus. This viral thing has to be put out to pasture. They may have a synthetic toxin invented in a lab somewhere that causes kids to have sick feelings, may be a snake venom as Dr. Aldiss says, may be some other toxin, that did not occur naturally, but fostering this virus hoax only creates fear, and allows people to blindly jab their kids thinking they are doing the right thing.

3 0 Reply • Share ›

evedawn
10 days ago
Nazi propaganda portrayed people persecuted by the regime as vermin, parasites, or diseases. Jews were accused of spreading Typhus. But humans are not vectors of disease. Not then. Not now. Stop the spread of misinformation and feeding into the fear.

2 0 Reply • Share ›

WakeUpAndDream

9 days ago

Another classic example where reading an article's conclusions/analysis about a study lead you down a false path. Simply click on the study and the method reveals how the entire study is built on nonsense. For starters, they determine these kids are "positive" from a "test" that never actually shows nor proves the existence of a virus. Second, they determine the kids are "still infectious" by nonsense percentages of stuff they observe under a microscope -- they never have to actually prove infectiousness by actually showing that someone else truly gets "infected" with the exact same thing by the ill feeling host. They simply tell you they are "infectious" for X number of days and the gullible believe this.

1 0 Reply • Share ›

zega

3 days ago

Oh BTW same results are visible in adults https://www.nejm.org/doi/fu... (fig. 1E)

0 0 Reply • Share ›

zega

3 days ago

No one likes to be wrong, so what is the solution: https://en.wikipedia.org/wi...
Where" Escalation of commitment is a human behavior pattern in which an individual or group facing increasingly negative outcomes from a decision, action, or investment nevertheless continue the behavior instead of altering course. The actor maintains behaviors that are irrational, but align with previous decisions and actions.[1]" in short delusional/crazy

0 0 Reply • Share ›

Dacke

4 days ago

How many times can Big Pharma trick us with these poison injections? Haven't we learned anything from the previous so-called the pandemic?
"You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can not fool all of the people all of the time."
— Abraham Lincoln

0 0 Reply • Share ›

John Stone Mod → Dacke

4 days ago

I always thought that quote sounded more like WC Fields, though quite apposite.

0 0 Reply • Share ›

Subscribe Privacy Do Not Sell My Data